



15. AWARENESS

Conservation awareness is instrumental to conducting natural resources management. USARAK's approach to awareness stresses education. It provides military personnel and the public with insights into Fort Greely's natural environment and conservation challenges. The more people know about the installation's unique natural resources, the more responsibly they will act toward them.

Education also promotes awareness of critical environmental projects and the rationale behind them. Activities such as fish stocking, erosion control, wildfire suppression, etc. can be accomplished with little conservation awareness effort since soldiers, recreationists, and the general public naturally support these easily understood efforts. However, issues such as trespass structures, restrictions on troop

operations, nongame management, bear baiting, pesticide use, etc. require effective conservation communication to obtain positive support and, perhaps more importantly, to avoid adverse reactions. A conservation awareness program must be directed to both installation and external interests if it is to be effective.

15-1 Objectives

Stewardship

- ▶ Involve the surrounding community in Fort Greely's natural resources program.
- ▶ Ensure that Fort Greely's natural resources program is coordinated with other agencies and conservation organizations with similar interests.

- ▶ Provide an understanding of the Fort Greely natural resources program through communication to installation and surrounding communities.
- ▶ Provide general conservation education to the Fort Greely community.
- ▶ Enhance professional skills of the Fort Greely natural resources staff.
- ▶ Increase understanding of natural resource conservation to youth groups.
- ▶ Create at least four natural resources television events per year, with topics chosen by Natural Resources Branch and PAO.

Quality of Life

- ▶ Use the media to educate the Fort Wainwright community regarding uses of natural resources for quality of life enhancement.
- ▶ Provide hunters, trappers, and anglers with information needed to enjoy their sports within regulations.
- ▶ Provide hunters, trappers, and anglers with information needed to understand their role in natural resources conservation.

Integration

- ▶ Use the natural resources program to support and enhance other elements within the USARAK Environmental Program.
- ▶ Provide decision-makers with information needed to make judgments, which affect the Fort Greely natural resources program.

15-2 Community Education

15-2a Natural and Cultural Resources Education and Awareness

Project Description. Conduct natural and cultural resources education and awareness about Fort Greely. The project will develop informational materials (brochures and videotapes) that will improve public awareness about the diverse and unique natural and cultural resources that are found at Fort Greely.

Project Justification. The Sikes Act and AR 200-3 require natural and cultural resources education and awareness.

Project Prescription. Ecosystem posters will be developed to educate the general public, post personnel, and post students on significant terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems on Army land.

15-2a(1) Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping Awareness

Description. Educate those who will hunt, fish, and/or trap on Fort Greely. Many nonresident military (those who have lived in Alaska for less than a year) hunters, anglers, and trappers need education on hunting bears and moose, caring for meat, 4-wheel drive operation, outdoor survival, ethics, etc. Some topics are common to the nation as a whole, but many are specific to the harsh conditions and opportunities of interior Alaska.

Methods. A fisheries biologist for ADF&G teaches soldiers about fishing opportunities during the annual spring training week on Fort Greely. This class includes fishing ethics, places to fish, public-private lands restrictions, etc.

During 1997-1998, ADF&G will develop an information sheet on fishing opportunities and requirements on military lands in Alaska. This will be coordinated with the three large Army installations in Alaska, including Fort Greely.

USARAK, ADF&G, and other agencies have brochures and other materials that are beneficial to soldiers who hunt, fish, trap, or participate in other forms of outdoor recreation on Fort Greely and other areas of Alaska. During 1998-2002, USARAK will compile and publish these materials as a booklet. This will be coordinated with other Army installations to provide similar information to all USARAK soldiers. Signatory partners on this INRMP will assist with the booklet.

During 1998-2002, USARAK will work with ADF&G to develop a Military Hunter Services Program patterned after the statewide civilian program operated by ADF&G. An introductory program will explain opportunities and requirements to hunt, fish, or trap in Alaska, with emphasis on military personnel and military lands. Additional species-specific (bear, moose, etc.) programs will be developed

and presented at appropriate times each year. USARAK will help develop this program, with ADF&G administering it. Some reimbursement on the part of attendees may be required. This program will cover all Army installations in Alaska. There may be an opportunity for partnerships with the USAF on this project as well.

15-2a(2) Regulation Awareness

Description. Educate soldiers training on Fort Greely and civilians on regulatory requirements associated with hunting, trapping, and fishing.

Methods. Educate post residents and civilians on installation, state, and federal wildlife and trespass regulations, etc. Develop handouts, maps, and common game violation information sheets, using the same format as the Soldier Guide. Develop a clinic for hunters using military lands (purchase videos, create handouts, etc.). MWR holds a moose clinic with the game warden in attendance in late August. The Natural Resources Branch does not sponsor this clinic.

15-2a(3) Youth Education

Description. Provide conservation education opportunities to young individuals and youth groups in the Fort Wainwright area. Long-term changes in conservation attitudes and knowledge are important aspects to an effective conservation awareness and education program. Such long-term changes are easiest achieved by working with youth; particularly youth groups that are already involved in conservation.

Methods. Fort Greely personnel are committed to cultivating a conservation ethic in local youth. Branch personnel work with youth groups on conservation programs. On occasion, Natural Resources Branch personnel also give talks to youth groups. Boy Scouts, in particular, need support with projects, merit badges, and conservation talks. Scouts have assisted with natural resources management on Fort Wainwright, such as an Eagle Scout project building boreal owl nesting boxes.

In 1998-2002, Fort Greely's natural resources personnel will continue to work with youth groups whenever possible, as a good investment in our future.

15-2b Watchable Wildlife

Project Description. Funds are required to conduct the Watchable Wildlife program on Fort Greely. The Watchable Wildlife program will provide improved wildlife viewing opportunities for soldiers, civilians, Alaska residents, and visitors, as well as benefit public relations for U.S. Army Alaska. Programs will include, but not be limited to, wildlife viewing, nature trails, interpretive signs, brochures, facilities, audio visual productions, public presentations, and cooperative publications with local, state, and federal agencies.

Project Justification. This project is in accordance with Public Law 86-797 (Sikes Act), AR 200-3 and national and statewide memoranda of understanding for Watchable Wildlife.

Project Prescription. Develop a bison viewing area on Fort Greely. Develop Fort Greely as an Alaska Wildlife Viewing Area.

15-2b(1) Bison Viewing Area

Description. Construct viewing platforms within sight of the bison food plots so visitors to Fort Greely can view the bison.

Methods. Plans for visitor viewing will be developed after bison use of food plots is determined. Plans will be coordinated with Range Control to minimize conflicts with military training. This project is not expected to be completed until 2001.

15-2b(2) Fort Greely as an Alaska Wildlife Viewing Area

Description. Investigate the possibility of adding Fort Greely to the *Alaska Wildlife Viewing Guide* (Sydeman and Lund, 1996).

Methods. Fort Richardson is listed in the *Alaska Wildlife Viewing Guide* (Sydeman and Lund, 1996) as a Watchable Wildlife site. USARAK will investigate the possibility of adding Fort Greely to this Viewing Guide when it is updated.

15-3 Professional Communications

Communication and interaction with other professionals will enhance the skills of Fort Greely's natu-

ral resources personnel. Additionally, information on natural resources projects occurring on Fort Greely will be accessible to other professionals in similar positions.

The Wildlife Society, Society of American Foresters, National Military Fish and Wildlife Association, and the Society for Ecological Restoration are among the professional societies which would meet the professional development needs of Fort Greely's natural resources managers. Membership in these societies is encouraged. They publish some of the best scientific journals in their professions, and current literature review is a necessary commitment to maintain professional standards. Attending meetings for these societies provides excellent opportunities to communicate with fellow professionals.

Other opportunities to communicate with professionals and enhance skills should be taken advan-

tage of regularly by Fort Greely personnel. The annual meeting and training workshop of the National Military Fish and Wildlife Association is one of the best opportunities for natural resources professionals to learn and teach others. This meeting includes DOD and Army breakout sessions, and an ITAM workshop that has become the best annual land management session for Army managers. The North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference provides opportunities to address national issues and priorities.

Specialized meetings include furbearer and predator symposia (especially those concerning northern species), LCTA workshops, seminars on law enforcement, and similar educational events. Attendance at these meetings is advantageous for enhancing professional skills.